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UNCLAS HARARE 001824

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT GOZ TO CLAMP DOWN ON OPPOSITION;
HARARE

11. Under headline "Signs of the end" the independent weekly "The Financial Gazette" dedicated its August 8 editorial to criticizing the government of Zimbabwe for mooted a plan to clamp down on opposition by withdrawing traveling documents from Zimbabweans opposed to the Mugabe administration. Excerpts:
12. "The threat by Home Affairs Minister John Nkomo to withdraw the passport of Zimbabweans who are opposed to the government and to slap them with exit visas is only the latest sign, if any was needed, of a regime gone berserk and clearly nearing its end. Not content with draconian laws rushed through Parliament earlier this year to silence democratic dissent, the besieged government now wants to clamp down further on the free movement and free speech of some citizens on the pretext that they are campaigning against Zimbabwe. That there is a world of difference between Zimbabwe, as a nation and as a state, and individual government members who are willfully flouting the law is conveniently ignored to try to appeal to the crude emotions of the common man. Needless to say that the proposed measures are grossly unconstitutional and aimed at pushing Zimbabwe back into the Stone Age. . .It is thus that the administration's counter-sanctions lobby has hatched the grand plan of taking harsh retaliatory action against all perceived enemies, both domestic and foreign, to try to weaken a people's resolve to end tyranny that is daily engulfing the land. . . ."

WHITEHEAD